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Services Division
European Satellite Committee

Meeting of 28 May 1958

Present: 30 members and guests.

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Mr. [REDACTED] Deputy Assistant Director, Office of Central Reference, talked to the Committee on East European and German Publications Procurement.

The procurement of Eastern European and German publications via the Foreign Service for the Department of State and other agencies is largely conducted by two full-time and five part-time publications officers at Berlin, Paris, Belgrade, Bucharest, Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw. In addition, Rome and Moscow provide a limited number of Satellite publications. State, CIA, NSA, AMS, USIA and the Library of Congress are the major consumers of publications from this area. In 1957, the most recent period for which complete statistics are available, CIA orders for European Satellite and German serial publications exceeded 1800 subscriptions, of which 14 percent were received by air pouch. Slightly less than 1300 individual titles were ordered. It is anticipated that final 1958 figures will show an appreciable all-around increase in ordered items. Comparatively less interest is shown in monographs: in a recent twelve month period approximately 2000 books were received, only 500 of which were ordered; the remainder were purchased under the Selection Program. The receipt of published materials remains large--incoming items from the area average over 30,000 a month. Delivery times from Eastern Europe average 8-10 days by air pouch and 5-8 weeks by sea, except for Germany and Poland where air is less than a week and sea delivery less than three weeks.

In the particular countries in question the procurement pictures differ considerably, and will therefore be summarized individually, as follows:

Albania: A number of difficulties are encountered in the procurement of Albanian materials. Quite aside from the geographic and political isolation of Albania from her neighbors and the very modest publications output in the country, the absence of any US diplomatic representation in Tirana necessitates indirect methods of procurement. Despite these drawbacks, Albanian publications gradually continue to become more accessible to the Washington intelligence community. Considerably more success has been achieved in the receipt of Albanian newspapers than with periodicals. The official Albanian catalogue of newspapers and periodicals lists roughly half of the titles known to exist. Albanian publications are currently procured through Berlin, The Hague, Moscow, Paris, Prague, and Rome.

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Bulgaria: Bulgaria presents procurement problems similar to those encountered in Albania. Considerable success has been achieved in obtaining Bulgarian materials through Paris, Belgrade, Prague, and Berlin. All but one of the 38 newspapers requested have been received; roughly 75 percent of the required periodicals have been obtained regularly.

Czechoslovakia: The publications program at Prague has been ably managed in recent years. All newspapers and 80 percent of the requested periodicals are received. The Selection Program has been fully utilized.

Germany: The US Mission, Berlin, is an important source of German, Soviet and Satellite publications. A full-time officer and staff provide US agencies with a very large quantity of serials and monographs of all kinds. The work of the PPO, who has regional responsibility for publications procurement in Austria and Switzerland, in addition to the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, is excellent and exemplary in every respect. Currently, CIA is receiving over 500 subscriptions to roughly 350 German titles. During a recent twelve month period the US Mission forwarded to the agencies served by ICD/FP 21,700 books, 86,500 newspapers and periodicals and 5000 exchange publications. Procurement for US agencies abroad increased the total by 1500 books and 49,000 newspapers and periodicals.

Hungary: The Hungarian publications picture has gradually become more stable following the many changes which occurred during and after the revolution of October 1956. The Legation personnel have been cooperative in obtaining available publications and in keeping the Department informed of changes. Book orders have been very satisfactorily filled. Selection Program funds have not, however, been fully utilized. While most of the requested newspapers are received, a large proportion of the ordered periodicals remain unavailable.

Poland: More publications are ordered from Poland than from any of the other European Satellites. A recent survey showed that Warsaw supplied almost 1000 serial subscriptions to Washington in 1957. This represents a 53 percent increase over 1956. In addition, 169 books--not including 82 telephone directories and diplomatic lists--were ordered.

Rumania: Rumania, among the European Satellite states with which the US maintains diplomatic relations, is the most difficult country in which to obtain publications.

Yugoslavia: In addition to Yugoslavian publications, the Embassy at Belgrade obtains Bulgarian publications. While Selection Program funds have not been fully utilized, a large number of publications have been purchased and forwarded. These have been found to be of uniformly high quality, which indicates that selection has been thoughtfully undertaken. Despite Yugoslavia's peculiar status, roughly 30 percent of the serial publications requested remain unavailable and the Embassy has been notified that many of the titles in question are only for official use.

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In conclusion Mr. [REDACTED] stated that it is not necessary to stress the importance of the European Satellite procurement program. The present program provides a large and varied quantity of published materials. There do not appear to be any glaring weaknesses in the program. There will always remain room for further improvement and refinements. This year duplicate subscriptions were somewhat increased in an attempt to reduce the want-list of some 230 titles from the area as a whole. New programs to obtain Albanian, Bulgarian and Rumanian publications were initiated during the year. Efforts have also been made to bring to the attention of the posts the importance of published materials to Washington consumers. A comprehensive study entitled: "Evaluation of Usefulness of Overt Literature from Soviet Bloc Countries Outside of the USSR" was recently sent to the Eastern European posts.

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On June 4, Mr. [REDACTED], St/FR, will talk to the Committee on FRA Program Planning. The meeting will be held at 1330 in Room 1121 M Building.

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Chairman

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